

CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
Ad Hoc Disabilities Task Force (DTF)
October 8, 2013 Minutes

The Disabilities Task Force of the City of Mesa met on October 8th, 2013,
at 6:00pm at the Mesa City Plaza, 20 E. Main St. Ste. 170.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mark Tompert, Chair
Denise Heap
LuAnn Schmidt

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Andrea Arenas
Ruth Giese
Jodi Sorrell

GUESTS

1. Call to Order.

Mr. Tompert called the meeting to order at 5:50pm.

2. Items from citizens present.

There were no citizens who requested to speak to DTF.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and take action regarding the Dial-a-Ride program from the City of Mesa Transit Director.

Ms. Sorrell, Mesa's Transit Services Director, explained the breakdown of the transit budget. There are four major areas for funding: Bus, Dial-a-Ride, RideChoice (formally Coupons for Cab), and Light Rail. Ms. Sorrell provided the funded budget for the programs for FY 13/14 as compared to FY 12/13. There are currently 23 bus routes in Mesa, of which the city pays to operate eight of those routes through the General Fund. The remaining routes are funded through Proposition 400 which was approved by citizens in 2004 for a 20-year sales tax to provide transit services.

Ms. Sorrell explained that there was a significant increase of Mesa residents getting ADA certification for Dial-a-Ride participation in early 2013. Cities are legally obligated to provide Dial-a-Ride service if a resident is ADA certified. Due to the increased cost of new participation, some of the funding was recuperated from the cancellation of a pilot bus route implemented last year in far east Mesa near Baseline/ Signal Butte. Given that funding for increased Dial-a-Ride usage comes from eliminating fixed bus routes, alternative plans are also offered such as RideChoice and Platinum Bus Passes. The previously provided Mileage Reimbursement program offered through Valley Metro was eliminated in December 2012 due to excessive administration time and cost. This program was a big benefit to Mesa residents, utilizing as many trips per month as Dial-a Ride, which may be the reason for the acceleration of ADA certification. Ms. Heap questioned if another agency or non-profit would be able to take over the maintenance of the Mileage Reimbursement program. In response, Ms. Sorrell advised that the program was initially administrated through a non-profit, but given that the program is federally funded it is difficult for other agencies to be as accountable as required. Ms. Sorrell stated that they have not given up on the program, but they are looking into other methods.

The final major area of funding is for the mile stretch of Light Rail. Ms. Sorrell noted that Mesa's station is ranked #1 with over 10% of the averaged 43k daily ridership. The majority of the 4,300 users at the Sycamore Station will ride bus to rail as opposed to park and ride. There is also a lot of turnover in the daily use at the park and ride in Mesa from people traveling for work, entertainment and other recreational usage. The next three mile stretch is set to open in early 2016.

Mr. Tompert recommended that DTF receive quarterly transit reports and annual reports to the board in order to be aware of programs and services offered.

4. Discuss, consider and take action on defining the Disabilities Task Force purpose and planned activities for 2013/14 year.

Mr. Tompert stated that purpose of DTF was to create a task force to evaluate the adequacy of services and programs for people with disabilities pertaining to the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008. The scheduling of regular DTF meetings and transit presentation updates have been the first step to meet this purpose. Mr. Tompert asked Ms. Giese, as Mesa's ADA Coordinator, to provide an overview of typical ADA calls and services provided by the city. Ms. Giese explained that she is typically contacted by citizens with ADA concerns outside of the city's regulations, such as wheelchair accessibility in a building. In these cases, Ms. Giese stated that she will provide information on the correct agency to report and offer calling assistance and/or follow up as needed. If a citizen's ADA concern is for the city, such as the need for an audio crosswalk, Ms. Giese will assist in contacting the responding department to report. Calls for ADA services and complaints are recorded internally on a quarterly basis. Mr. Tompert asked for an annual presentation be made to the board explaining ADA services and report on calls received.

5. Discuss, consider timeline and take action on activities outlined in Board's strategic plan:

- Hold an educational event related to service animals.

Mr. Tompert asked Ms. Schmidt if she had resources that would be able to come to the board to make a presentation on service animals. Ms. Schmidt advised that she will contact known representatives for Guide Dog for the Blind in order to schedule a meeting. Ms. Heap suggested that presentations should also be made from other service dog representatives such as those that assist with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Autism. Mr. Tompert agreed that members of DTF should work on making contact with such agencies in order to arrange a presentation at the regular board meeting. Mr. Tompert explained that this background information will help educate all members in order to assess plans for holding an educational event related to service animals. Ms. Giese suggested that information on service animals can also be distributed at city events.

- Invite court administrator Anne McQuade to present to the HRAB about the new protocol for diverting defendants with mental health issues.

Ms. Heap directed staff to schedule a presentation from Ms. McQuade at an upcoming board meeting. The protocol for diverting defendants also pertains to veterans and the homeless.

- Create ways to educate the community in mental health issues.

Similar to previous discussion, Mr. Tompert advised that the first step is for the board to educate themselves about mental health issues. Mr. Tompert recognized that the presentation from Ms. McQuade will help, as well as scheduling a presentation from Cheryl Anderson, Director of Recovery Support Services, from Marc Community Resources, Inc. Ms. Heap stated that she would like to encourage the Mesa Police Department to reinstate their Disabilities Advisory Board in order to be preventative rather than reactive. Mr. Tompert commented that this issue is also pertinent to the Veterans Task Force seeing that there are those who have served in the military that also suffer from mental health issues, PTSD and other similar disabilities.

6. Discuss, consider and take action on resources for distribution at City events.

Ms. Schmidt stated that she belongs to several organizations, such as the Federation for the Blind, who have pamphlets or brochures with information in simple etiquette to promote education and awareness on disabilities. She would like to make this type of information available for distribution at City events. The next City event is Celebrate Mesa on Saturday, October 19th from 5-9pm at Red Mountain Sports Complex. Ms. Schmidt has volunteered to help assist the Neighborhood Outreach & Diversity Departments booth. Mr. Tompert asked Ms. Schmidt to report back to the board on the success of distributing information in order to determine if they should get their own booth in the future.

7. Discuss and consider identifying organizations as partners of the Disabilities Task Force.

Mr. Tompert noted that several organizations have already been identified through their discussions such as Marc Community Resources, Inc, Community Bridges, ABIL, A New Leaf who could make presentations in the future. Ms. Heap suggested they plan for contacting these agencies at the next meeting.

8. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

Ms. Giese asked the members if being a temporary task force is representative of their work intentions, or if they would prefer being an ongoing action team. Ms. Heap made the motion to change the name of the task force from Ad Hoc Disabilities Task Force to Ad Hoc Disabilities Action Team. Ms. Schmidt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- Next DTF meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12th, 2013 at 6pm.

Ms. Schmidt made the motion to change the occurrence of the meetings from the second Tuesday of the month to the third Tuesday of the month. Ms. Heap seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator